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I KNEW STALIN

I KNEW STALIN

BY

ANATOLE V. BAIKALOFF

O, while you live, tell truth, and shame the devil.

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry IV*, Act III.

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PREFACE

IT has been suggested to me that I should write a Preface, setting out some facts about myself, so as to allow the readers of this little book to form an opinion about my authority to speak upon Stalin's personality and the conditions in Soviet Russia generally.

Well, here is my story.

I was born fifty-seven years ago in Siberia, in a Cossack family whose founder belonged to a small band of men who conquered that vast and wild country for Russia in the middle of the seventeenth century.

My father, a gold-mine owner, was able to give me a good education. He sent me to the provincial classical school—*gymnasia*—where, apart from the useful store of general knowledge, I acquired, under the influence of Greek and Latin philosophers, poets, and writers, a taste and longing for individual and political freedom.

The period of my maturity coincided with the rise of the liberation movement in Russia. The reaction, which was set up after the liberal reign

of the Emperor Alexander II by his successor, began to fade away, and the minds of young Russian intellectuals were in a state of turmoil. When in 1902 I entered the University of Kazan as a medical student, I was ready to join those who were working to make a civilized land of free and enlightened democracy out of reactionary and backward Russia.

It was a tragedy of Russia, and, incidentally, the tragedy of my generation, that the Tsarist Government still clung to the shibboleths of absolutism, and refused to introduce reforms for which the country was clamouring. For an impatient youth as I was then, no other way out but a violent political revolution appeared to be possible.

Two revolutionary parties were in existence already at that time—Socialist-Revolutionaries and Social Democrats. I joined the latter, and when, in 1903, the Party split into two factions—radical Bolshevik and moderate Menshevik—I found myself in the ranks of the Bolsheviks. I cannot explain why I made this choice. Probably my temperament inherited from the generations of Cossacks—fighting men and Empire builders—was responsible for this.

I plunged myself into the turbulent sea of revolution, and for the next ten years, till 1912, led a life of a 'professional revolutionary.' My record

during these years was terrible : twelve political arrests, three years in various prisons, three years in exile in the Arctic regions of Siberia, over three years of the life of a hunted political conspirator and agitator, years of feverish activity, adventure, danger, and sufferings.

I travelled with faked passports, participated in armed risings, organized strikes and street demonstrations, established secret presses, wrote revolutionary leaflets and pamphlets, delivered inflammatory speeches, faced several trials, one of which might have ended in a death sentence, and so forth.

In the course of these wanderings, in prisons, and in exile, I met a large number of Russian revolutionaries of every persuasion on the footing of complete equality and intimacy. Many of them played an important rôle in the history of Russia. I learned also many intimate secrets of the Bolshevik Party and gained a vast store of inside knowledge of the Russian revolutionary movement generally.

When I returned from exile to civilized parts, I found the conditions considerably changed. Russia had a Parliament, freedom of political opinion, Press, assembly, and association was more or less assured, the country was making big strides along the path of material and cultural progress,

and there was scope for peaceful constructive work for the welfare of the people.

In 1912 I joined the co-operative movement in Siberia and contributed a good deal of my energy to its speedy development. In 1917 I was on the Board of Directors of the Pan-Siberian Co-operative Union, which had an aggregate membership of over five million.

I took an active part in the 1917 Revolution which put an end to the Russian monarchy. At first I preserved my connection with the Bolshevik Party, but in May, 1917, after Lenin's return from Switzerland, I severed my relations with this party. It became quite clear to me that the Bolsheviks, having changed their programme and tactics, had become enemies of the Russian people. They wanted to introduce immediately Socialism in a country which had not been prepared for such an upheaval by its economic and social evolution. I foresaw that such an attempt would result in bloodshed, in terrible sufferings, and in destruction of many Russian national cultural traditions.

Hence sprang my determined opposition to Communism in all its aspects—ideological and practical. I remain in this opposition till the present day.

In November, 1917, I stood as a Socialist

(Menshevik) candidate for the ill-fated Pan-Russian Constituent Assembly, which was to work out the Constitution of the Russian Democratic Republic. My candidature was supported by the entire Cossack population in my constituency (Yenniseisk province of Siberia).

Early in 1918 my co-operative colleagues decided to send a mission abroad to establish trade relations between Siberia and foreign countries. I was persuaded to join this mission as its Secretary-General. One of my qualifications for the post was knowledge of the English language, which I taught myself in prison, my first textbook having been the English Bible, the only book I was allowed to have.

Thus, during the Russian Civil War, I was living abroad, in China and Japan. In the latter country, for a time, I acted as a diplomatic agent for the anti-Soviet Government of Siberia.

I arrived in London in December, 1919, having travelled via Canada and the United States.

In 1923 the London office of my organization had to be closed down because, by that time, independence of co-operative movement had been destroyed by the Soviets, and we lost any possibility of maintaining contact with our people in Siberia. Although Soviet representatives several

times approached me with tempting offers of employment in one of their London trading organizations, I declined these offers, preferring the independence of a journalist and writer to the opulence of a Soviet official. I had no intention of rendering any help to the oppressors of my country. I wanted to fight them in the same way as I had fought the oppressors of the old regime. My sympathies have always been with the oppressed.

During the last fifteen years I have formed wide connections not only in Russian, but also in foreign political circles, and made it my business to collect systematically, through the sources to which a foreigner can hardly get access, inside information about developments in Soviet Russia generally, and within the Russian Communist Party particularly. This work, of course, was greatly facilitated by my revolutionary past, and by intimate understanding of the mentality of Soviet leaders.

Every possible care has been taken to check accuracy of the facts which I give in this book. But many of them were obtained through confidential channels which, obviously, cannot be disclosed. For this category of facts only my own authority can be proffered.

Such is my story. I leave it to the readers to

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pronounce judgement upon my competence to write about Stalin and the Communist regime in Russia.

ANATOLE V. BAIKALOFF.

LONDON,

January 15, 1940.

I

Stalin's Childhood

STALIN'S CHILDHOOD

IT is noteworthy that almost all present-day dictators are men of very humble social origin. Mussolini's father was a village blacksmith ; Hitler is the son of a petty official of the Austrian Customs ; Kemal Ataturk was born in a poverty-stricken family of a Turkish Government clerk. Joseph Stalin, born on December 21, 1879, shares this distinction with other dictators : his father, Vissarion Dzhugashvili, a peasant from the Georgian village Lilo, was a poor cobbler in Gori, a small town near Tiflis, where he owned a humble repair shop.

Very little is known about Stalin's early life. And what is known points to the fact that his childhood was far from being happy and carefree. Besides, there are strong reasons for believing that his natural inheritance was, from the eugenic point of view, rather doubtful. His father was a habitual drunkard and his mother a poor half-wit, almost a lunatic. Dr. B., a Georgian and a native of Gori, who knew Stalin's parents quite well, told me that he frequently saw Stalin's

mother wandering through the streets dishevelled, with her hair hanging loose, crying, praying, singing and muttering to herself. In old Russia such harmless lunatics were never shut up in an asylum. They wandered about, being fed and sheltered by kind-hearted people who often looked upon such idiots with a kind of religious reverence as on persons 'marked with God's finger.'

It is easy to imagine how dreadful and drab Stalin's early childhood was. His drunken father severely thrashed him at the slightest provocation, he went hungry, slept on a bare dirty floor, his clothes were in rags. Mother's love and caresses were denied to him. Undoubtedly, these early impressions were bound to leave a permanent stamp on the character of the man.

Stalin's first school was bazaars and streets, and the companions of his boyhood were 'kintos,' street hawkers and petty thieves, the 'gamins' of an Eastern city. From them Stalin may have acquired his rough manners, his rudeness, his brutal cynicism, his unruly temper, his utter disregard for other people's feelings.

Vissarion Dzhugashvili died when little Joseph was about nine years old. The boy would probably have become a habitual jail-bird if a kind, childless shopkeeper, a distant relative, also a Dzhugashvili by name, had not taken care of him and adopted

him. The adoptive parents did their best for the boy. They sent him first to an elementary school and then to the Ecclesiastical Seminary in Tiflis, in order to prepare him for priesthood in the Greek Orthodox Church.

In later years, when Stalin became dictator of Russia, he repaid his debt of gratitude to his adoptive mother, Ekaterina Georgievna Dzhugashvili. The old woman who, after the death of her husband, earned her living as a seamstress, was moved into the palace of the former Viceroy of the Caucasus. The American journalist, Mr. Knickerbocker, saw her there in 1930. He failed, however, to discover that she had been Stalin's adoptive, not natural mother. Stalin himself, when visiting Tiflis, never went to see the old lady, nor did she travel to Moscow to see the Dictator.

Ekaterina Dzhugashvili died on June 7, 1937. Some two years previously she began to develop a sort of religious mania. She turned one of the rooms in her apartment into a private chapel, hung it over with ikons, lamps, etc., and used to spend hours there in prayer. She also attended regularly evening and morning services in a nearby church. Devoutly she knelt before ikons, went to confession, received the Holy Sacrament, and very strictly observed all the rites of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The people of Tiflis began to talk. Naturally, everybody wanted to see the godless dictator's mother humbly worshipping in the church, and the people flocked thither. Not daring to close the church or take any drastic measures against the old woman, the local Communists tried to persuade her from a public exhibition of her religious devotion. But the old lady was obstinate. In reply to all the remonstrances she only said : ' I am old and my end is near. I pray to God to forgive me my sins and the sins of Joseph. May He be merciful to both of us.'

After some hesitation the Secretary of the Tiflis Communist Committee reported to Stalin. The Dictator ordered the old lady to be removed to Gori. In May, 1937, she contracted pneumonia, and as the hospital accommodation in Gori was inadequate, they brought her to Tiflis for treatment. Soon afterwards Ekaterina Dzhugashvili died without having been permitted to see a priest and receive absolution. They buried her secretly, at night, without any religious ceremony. Stalin did not come from Moscow to attend the funeral.

II

Initial Stages of Stalin's Career

INITIAL STAGES OF STALIN'S CAREER

THE religious fervour displayed by Stalin's adoptive mother in her last days explains, perhaps, why she and her husband sent little Joseph to the Ecclesiastical Seminary. But the Church career could hardly have appealed to a boy of Stalin's antecedents and temperament. What he learned there was probably the art of concealing his real feelings and thoughts under the cloak of an assumed respectability and piety, the art of feigning and hypocrisy.

Anyhow, early in 1898, he became involved in some trouble with the school authorities and was expelled from the Seminary. Soon afterwards he joined the Social-Democratic Party, thus starting his revolutionary career which, eventually, was crowned with such a dazzling success.

On the initial stages of this career the founder of the Georgian Socialist Party, Noah Dzhordania, President in 1918-1921 of the independent republic of Georgia, relates some interesting facts. Stalin was entrusted with the task of initiating a small group of Tiflis working men

into the rudiments of Marxism, but instead he began to incite them to revolt against the Party leaders. An inquiry into his activities was instituted, and he was found guilty of a gross breach of Party discipline and expelled from the Party as 'an incorrigible intriguer.'¹

Stalin had to leave Tiflis. He went to Batoum where clandestinely, under the assumed name of 'Soso,' he joined the local branch of the Party. Soon, however, he was at his old tricks once again. He accused the local leaders of the Party of cowardice and betrayal of the workers, and urged his adherents to start an armed rebellion against the Government. On March 1, 1902, an attempt to storm the local prison where a number of political offenders were kept, was made by a group of hot-headed young workers. The authorities had to disperse the mob by force. The result was that fourteen of the rioters were killed, forty wounded, and many arrested.

Everybody knew that 'Soso' had been behind this senseless riot, and a suspicion arose that he had engineered it by order of the police, as an *agent-provocateur*. Had he not been arrested by the Okhrana, the political police, soon afterwards, he would certainly have been murdered by his enraged followers.

¹ NOAH DZHORDANIA, *Poslednia Novosti*, December 16, 1936, Part 1.

After having spent some months in prison, Stalin, by the administrative order of the Home Secretary, was deported to Siberia. But he stayed there for only a few weeks and escaped back to Georgia once again.

As he could not any longer live under his own name he provided himself with a forged passport and became a professional revolutionary. Stalin's sycophants say that he edited Socialist papers and pamphlets, and conducted oral Socialist propaganda. Probably this is an exaggeration. As far as I have been able to ascertain, his jobs were mostly of a technical character: distribution of illicit literature, establishment of secret presses, smuggling of arms, etc.

This work, nevertheless, required a good deal of caution, daring, and cunning. A professional revolutionary in Tsarist Russia was hotly hunted by the Okhrana, and he had to be cool, wary, and bold if he wanted to avoid arrest and Siberian *katorga* (prison with forced labour).

Stalin learned this dangerous trade very thoroughly indeed. His skill and cunning in avoiding detection are proved by the fact that when arrested he always managed to get off with trivial punishment. The Okhrana never seemed to have been able to collect sufficient incriminating evidence to hand over his case to the judicial

authorities, who could have sentenced him to many years of imprisonment or to banishment to Siberia for life. They dealt with him as with a person of 'suspicious character.'

Between 1902 and 1913 Stalin was arrested six times, and in each case he was exiled by the administrative order of the Home Secretary to the northern provinces of European Russia or to Siberia for a term of a few years. Each time, however, except the last, he escaped and returned to his underground revolutionary activities after having spent a few days or weeks in exile.

This, incidentally, shows that the Tsarist police system was not so thorough in its methods of detection and so severe in its dealings with the revolutionaries as is commonly supposed to have been the case. Stalin, undoubtedly, was a very dangerous man and his activities were not always concerned with comparatively harmless propaganda. And yet he was dealt with very leniently. They deported him to places from where escape was easy.

When, in 1903, a split occurred in the 'Social-Democratic Party and the extreme Bolshevik wing under Lenin's leadership was formed, Stalin joined this wing, although the overwhelming majority of Georgian Social-Democrats ranged themselves with the Mensheviks. It is said that only Stalin's

cunning, his carefully thought out and masterfully executed intrigues, helped the Bolsheviks to maintain their organizations in Transcaucasia and to gain some influence over the workers of Baku and Tiflis. How unscrupulous Stalin was in these intrigues is shown by the fact that his favourite ruse in fighting the Mensheviks was to spread underhand rumours accusing prominent Menshevist leaders of being in the pay of the secret Tsarist police !

III

Stalin—Revolutionary Bandit

STALIN—REVOLUTIONARY BANDIT

THE revolution of 1905-1906 did not fulfil the hopes which the revolutionary leaders had placed in it. While considering the causes of this failure, Lenin came to the conclusion that the chief reason was the inadequacy of the funds which were at the disposal of his party. He turned his energy and attention to repairing this deficiency.

The first method employed by him had a long historical tradition behind it. They say that it was first thought of by the ancient Phœnicians who, during their struggle against the Pharaohs, used to debase Egyptian gold coins. Lenin was original in one respect: he made an attempt at the printing of forged treasury notes, not in a forger's den, but in the Russian State printing office itself!

But the attempt failed because the Bolshevik workers employed at the printing office, who at first agreed to take part in the plot, were seized with funk, and Lenin entrusted one of his closest associates, 'Nikitich' (the revolutionary

alias of the late Leonid Borissovich Krassin, the Soviet Ambassador in London in 1925-26), with the job. The Berlin police, however—the printing of the forged notes was to be done in Germany—got wind of Krassin's scheme and nipped it in the bud.

The second method of filling the Party coffers as invented by Lenin was not so hackneyed. Lenin ordered two of the Party comrades to marry rich women and surrender the dowry to the Bolshevik Party funds. Both marriages were successfully brought to a conclusion. Unfortunately, a hitch occurred with one of the happy bridegrooms, and thanks to that the secret petered out, namely, the man refused to make the agreed contribution, preferring to use his wife's money for his personal enjoyment.

Curiously enough, the difference between this man and Lenin was made the subject of an arbitration, and the unfaithful Bolshevik was ordered to pay a considerable portion of the dowry into Lenin's treasury. It must be mentioned, however, that the payment was made under duress: Lenin quite openly threatened to murder the man should he fail to part with the money.

The matrimonial possibilities of obtaining cash for the revolutionary cause were, of course, few and far between. Besides, it was rather difficult

to find, even among the most faithful Bolsheviks, suitable men who would agree to sell themselves to rich old women for the Party's benefit. Therefore, Lenin turned his efforts to a method which at the time was successfully applied by Anarchist groups or by the bands of common robbers who chose to call themselves Anarchists. In the Russian revolutionary slang this method was known as 'ex' (expropriation). Here it would be called 'hold up.'

Lenin's right-hand man in this enterprise was a person who was known among the Bolsheviks under numerous aliases: 'Soso,' 'Koba,' 'David,' 'Nisheradze,' 'Chizhikov,' 'Ivanovich,' etc. Later, under the alias of 'Stalin,' he became the all-powerful Red Tsar of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Nobody knows and nobody will ever know how many 'exs' were carried out under Stalin's direction. There are certain things which even such a cynical man as Stalin would rather prefer to forget or to suppress. The Georgian Mensheviks who ought to know something about Stalin's exploits say, however, that he was directly responsible for the robbing of the Chiatury Manganese Company's offices, for the sanguinary hold-up of Kodzhary, and for the theft of money from the Gori provincial Government Treasury.

The most successful and ruthless of these robberies is worth relating in some detail.

On the morning of June 26, 1907, the cashier of the Tiflis branch of the State Bank and his assistant went to the central post office to collect the consignment of treasury notes (341,000 roubles) remitted from St. Petersburg. They took the money to the bank in a cab which was followed by another vehicle with two armed guards. Both carriages were escorted by a body of mounted Cossacks. When the train was passing from Erivansky Square to Sololakskaya Street, a bomb was thrown at it from the top of Prince Sumbatov's house. Simultaneously several other bombs were thrown from the pavement, and fire was opened on the Cossacks with revolvers.

The square at the time was crowded. The explosion, of course, caused confusion which soon developed into a panic, and in the mad rush for safety no one saw what had become of the money. The cashier and his assistant were thrown out of the carriage by the force of the explosion, and the horses bolted. At the farther end of the square a tall man was seen to rush towards the horses. Another terrible explosion followed and everything was draped in clouds of smoke and dust. One of the witnesses, however, saw a man in an officer's tunic run to the broken

carriage, snatch something from it and drive away in a cab.

Altogether fifty persons were killed or wounded in this sanguinary affair. All police investigations failed completely, and the money was never recovered. Only after the Bolshevik revolution did it become known that Stalin was responsible for the organization of this 'ex,' that the name of the man in the officer's uniform was Ter-Petrosian (nickname 'Kamo'), that the money remained hidden in the sofa of the chief astronomer of the Tiflis Observatory till it was safe to take it to Finland, where Lenin was living at the time.

In the beginning of 1908 a small part of the money was found in Paris where a certain Wallakh, known in the Russian revolutionary circles as 'Papasha' ('Daddy'), and now known to the world under the alias of 'M. Maxim Litvinov,' was arrested while changing Russian five hundred rouble notes which disappeared during the Tiflis hold-up. (Series AM Nos. as from 62900.)

In fairness to Stalin it should, however, be mentioned here that he never appropriated the proceeds of the 'exs' for his own use. In this respect his hands, stained as they are with human blood, are clean, which cannot be said about many of his former and present Party comrades.

The advisability of refilling the Party coffers by

means of hold-ups was hotly objected to not only in the Socialist circles in general, but also in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party. The great majority of the members were decidedly against it, because of the corruption which such robberies produced on the morale of the revolutionaries. After the Tiflis raid the Transcaucasian provincial committee of the Party instituted an inquiry into this bloody affair. The result was that Stalin and several of his associates were expelled from the Party.

Stalin was obliged to leave the Caucasus and shift his activities to the central Russian provinces where his participation in the Tiflis raid was not known. Lenin supplied him with necessary introductions. In 1911 Stalin went to Paris and Italy where, for a few weeks, he studied at the school established by Maxim Gorki in Capri for training the Bolshevik propagandists. In 1913, upon his return to Russia, Stalin was arrested and deported to the Turukhansky Kray (Eastern Siberia, the lower reaches of the River Yennisei) for a term of five years.

In August, 1916, he was brought to Krasnoyarsk, the capital town of the province, in order to be conscripted into the army. But the medical examiners found him unfit for the service: his left arm was dislocated in early boyhood, and,

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owing to it being badly set, it was stiff in the elbow joint. The governor of the province permitted him to stay, for the duration of the term of his exile, in Achinsk, a small town on the Trans-Siberian railway.

IV

I Meet Stalin

I MEET STALIN

LIKE most of the Siberian townships Achinsk, with its six thousand inhabitants, was really a large-sized village, and not a city. The only brick buildings were a couple of churches and half a dozen houses belonging to the well-to-do local merchants. The great majority of the dwellings were small single-storeyed cottages containing three or four rooms. One or two cinemas and a social club provided the only facilities for distraction and recreation. Nothing has ever happened in this peaceful Siberian backwater, and life, generally, was dreary, drab, and cheap. Anyhow, Stalin, who received a Government grant of 15 roubles (31 shillings) a month, was fairly well off.

I met him there several times late in 1916, at Kamenev's, who had also been exiled to this place and lived, together with his wife Olga Davidovna (Trotsky's sister), a pretty but somewhat vain and capricious woman, in a small but warm and comfortably furnished house.

There was nothing striking or even remarkable

either in Stalin's appearance or in his conversation. Thick-set, of medium height, with a swarthy face pitted by smallpox, a drooping moustache, thick hair, narrow forehead, and rather short legs (this physical deformity of Stalin is skilfully concealed in all the known photographs: he is usually photographed either in a sitting position, behind his desk, or in a long army overcoat), he produced the impression of a man of poor intellectual abilities. His small eyes, hidden under bushy eyebrows, were dull and deprived of that friendly humorous expression which forms such a prominent feature of his flattering post-revolutionary portraits. His Russian was very poor. He spoke haltingly, with a strong Georgian accent; his speech was dull and dry, and entirely devoid of any colour and witticism.

In this respect the contrast with Kameněv, a brilliant speaker and accomplished conversationalist, was striking. To chat with Kamenev was a real intellectual delight, and we spent hours at the customary Russian tea-table, drinking numberless glasses of tea from the boiling *samovar*, discussing international and Russian problems which had arisen during the Great War, or exchanging our revolutionary reminiscences.

Stalin usually remained taciturn and morose, placidly smoking his pipe filled with atrocious

makhorka (Russian common tobacco). I remember how this poisonous smoke irritated Olga Davidovna. She sneezed, coughed, groaned, implored Stalin to stop smoking, but he never paid any attention to her.

Stalin's rare contributions to the conversation Kamenev usually dismissed with brief, almost contemptuous remarks. It was evident that he thought Stalin's reasonings unworthy of any serious consideration.

My general impression of Stalin, gained in the course of these few meetings, were that his intellectual standard was much below that of an average 'Party worker.' It was evident that his education was very deficient and that the main stock of his ideas was borrowed from popular twopence-halfpenny Socialist pamphlets. It was equally plain to me that he was a narrow-minded, fanatical man.

In any case, Stalin has failed to produce on me an impression of getting into personal contact with an outstanding personality, and I should have probably forgotten ever having met him had he not attained the position of autocrat of All Russias.

As a matter of fact Stalin never enjoyed any influence in the ranks of the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik Party. No one considered him to

be one of the leaders of the Party, and he himself seemed to be quite content with his subordinate position. Poor education, insufficient knowledge of the Russian language, and incapacity for abstract theoretical cogitation prevented Stalin from becoming an effective writer, and as a public speaker he was no good at all. Neither was there any personal charm about him which sometimes gives a man a kind of magnetic power. His appearance was rather repellent ; his manners were coarse ; his general attitude towards other people was rude, provocative, and cynical.

V

Stalin during the Civil War

STALIN DURING THE CIVIL WAR

AFTER the March revolution of 1917 Stalin went to Petrograd, and, as one of the old Bolshevik guards, was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Party. Later, when Lenin came to Petrograd, having passed through Germany in a sealed carriage, and took the direction of the Party affairs in his firm hands, Stalin, his faithful lieutenant, was made a member of the Political Bureau, a small body which planned and prepared the armed revolt against the Provisional Government in November, 1917.

His part in this revolt was, however, a very subordinate one. Anyhow, in 1917 and in the following years, Stalin did not shine as a prominent man in the councils of the Communist Party. I possess a photograph, taken in 1922, in which about sixty-five 'organizers and leaders' of the Bolshevik revolution are depicted: Stalin is not among them.

During the Civil War of 1918-1920 Stalin held minor posts in the Red Army and did not greatly distinguish himself. His only military feat was

the defence of Tsaritsin in the early part of 1919. But the tenacity displayed by the Soviet forces in this conflict was due to Voroshilov, who was the G.O.C. of the garrison, and not to Stalin, who was the political commissar, and did not interfere with the actual fighting.

As a matter of fact, Stalin was indirectly responsible for many defeats which the Reds suffered at that time. On several occasions he ordered trains carrying supplies and munitions to the other sectors of the front to be diverted to Tsaritsin. Owing to that the Red Army units could not repulse the attacks of the Whites and had to retreat. Stalin also refused to execute the orders sent to the Tsaritsin garrison by the G.H.Q., thus upsetting the plans of military operations. He was a general nuisance, and Trotsky had him recalled to Moscow, where he was severely reprimanded by Lenin, and for some time kept 'in cold storage.'

During the Russo-Polish war of 1920 Stalin was attached as a political commissar to the staff of the South-Western Soviet Army. It was he who must bear the main responsibility for the strategic blunder which helped the Poles to win the war.

Early in June, 1920, the first Soviet Cavalry Army, which was fighting on the south-western

front, broke through the Polish defence and after a series of bloody battles at Berdichev, Zytomir, and Novograd-Volynsk, cleared its way to Warsaw. However, instead of continuing the advance to the north-west, towards the Polish capital, Voroshilov, the G.O.C. of the south-western front, upon Stalin's instigation, turned from Rovno, south-west, towards Lvov.

The Red G.H.Q. wired frantic orders to Stalin and Voroshilov to continue their advance on Warsaw, but they tore the dispatches to pieces and disregarded the instructions.

Thus, when the critical 'battle of Warsaw' was fought, in the middle of August, by the Soviet armies led by Tukhachevsky from the north, the 1st Soviet Cavalry Army was still some two hundred miles from the Polish capital and could not render any help by attacking the Poles from the south, in flank, and rear. Only on August 22 it turned on its track and headed for Warsaw. But it was too late. The Poles, directed by the brilliant French soldier, General Weygand, rallied, and managed to deal a crushing blow to Tukhachevsky. A week later the 1st Cavalry Army suffered a terrible defeat near Lublin and had to retreat hastily and in disorder.

This flagrant disobedience to the central command, dictated by bitter jealousy, which Stalin

and Voroshilov had harboured against Trotsky and Tukhachevsky, was the principal cause of the crushing of the Red Army and of the loss of the war. Lenin, once again, recalled Stalin to Moscow, and for two years kept him in disgrace.

It cannot be denied, however, that Stalin displayed a good deal of cold cruelty in combating the counter-revolution, thus rendering some important services to the Soviet cause. Only two men in the ranks of the Russian Communist Party, Trotsky and Zinoviev, could have equalled him in this respect, and only the half-mad Dzerzhinsky, founder and head of the Soviet Secret Police, could have boasted of surpassing him.

Stalin has never held a prominent post in the Soviet Government. When, after the November revolution, Lenin formed his first Council of People's Commissaries, he allotted to Stalin the post of the Commissary for Minor Nationalities, an office which was soon abolished as superfluous. It is said that Stalin took no interest in his duties and visited the offices of his Commissariat only once or twice. In 1922 he was made the Chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, which office he resigned early in 1923. Since that time he has remained outside the official Soviet Government.

VI

Stalin's Ascent

STALIN'S ASCENT

HOW did Stalin come to power ? How did he work up his way from the obscure position of a subordinate satellite of Lenin to that of boss of the Communist Party and of Dictator of Russia ? People are apt to judge by results. The common reasoning is : if a man has succeeded in getting himself into power, undoubtedly there must be something in his character and personality which justifies this success. Such reasoning is generally sound, though not always, when applied to public men whose careers are made in democratically run countries. Stalin, however, has wormed his way to power under entirely different conditions, and we have in history many instances wherein, owing to a peculiar concatenation of circumstances, third-rate men were able to attain power in despotically or autocratically governed countries.

The peculiar conditions under which Stalin has made his dazzling career must always be borne in mind. Lenin's accession to supreme power in Russia was entirely different. His leadership in the old Bolshevik Party was never challenged by

anyone. He built up his reputation of a most prominent Party philosopher, writer, spokesman, organizer, and tactician during twenty-five years of his work in the Party, and for the Party. Moreover, he possessed a magnetic personality. He believed fanatically in the impeccability of his theories and in his mission as a proletarian leader and liberator, and inspired this belief in his followers.

As we have already seen, Stalin lacks all these qualities. There were, amongst the Bolshevik leaders, many men much more capable than Stalin. Trotsky, Kamenev, Bukharin, Tomsky, and even Zinoviev and Rykov were intellectually head and shoulders above the poorly educated, primitive Georgian, and their services to the Bolshevik cause were far greater.

It may sound paradoxical, but nevertheless it is a Gospel truth that the very lack of intellectual abilities was the chief cause of Stalin's success. Of course, Chance has also played into Stalin's hands.

As I have already mentioned, between 1920 and 1922 Stalin was in disgrace with Lenin. But still the shrewd old man was reluctant to part for ever with his hitherto faithful adherent. He appointed Stalin first to the post of Chief of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and then to

the office of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

How low was Lenin's opinion of Stalin is shown in the following incident. When the candidatures to the post of Chief Inspector were discussed at the meeting of the Council of People's Commissaries and one of the members suggested another man's candidature, and began to praise him as a clever and capable official, Lenin curtly interrupted :

‘ We do not want a clever man at the post. Let's appoint Stalin.’

Lenin thoroughly understood the job of a political dictator. Although his authority in the councils of the Bolshevik Party was unassailable, he always took good care to ensure his position. One of his methods was to get his most faithful and blindly obedient lieutenants to be elected to the Central Committee of the Party. A born autocrat, he could not tolerate independent, strong men near him. Trotsky, the only man whom Lenin considered to be more or less his equal in intellectual status and abilities, could maintain his position merely because he had never seriously revolted against Lenin's leadership.

As to Stalin, Lenin was not afraid of him as of a possible rival ; intellectually the man was a nonentity, and his quarrelsome nature, rudeness,

and coarse manners prevented him from obtaining a strong personal following amongst the Party members. Lenin realized that the power was tending to concentrate not in the official Soviet Government, but in the Political Bureau of the Communist Party. It was, therefore, of paramount importance for him to have absolutely obedient, faithful, and, at the same time, not too clever men in such key positions as those of the secretaries of the Central Committee, and, especially, in the post of General Secretary. The men chosen by Lenin for these posts—Stalin, Molotov, and Mikhailov—were all of the same type: good and obedient executive workers, but men poorly equipped for political leadership.

Besides, in Lenin's time, the office of the General Secretary carried no political weight or importance at all. His duty was to manage administrative affairs of the Communist Party. Lenin was the absolute boss of the Party and did not delegate his powers to any one of his Party associates.

Thus the original appointment of Stalin to the post of General Secretary was purely accidental: should Lenin have had someone equally obedient and equally nondescript, Stalin would never have attained the power he enjoys now. Moreover, it is certain that at that time Stalin did

not cherish any plans as to his own dictatorship, and was quite content with his position in the Party.

When, in 1922, owing to his fatal illness, Lenin had to retire from active leadership, the supreme power fell, naturally, to Kamenev and Zinoviev, his most capable lieutenants. As they were too busy with high politics—Kamenev was the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissaries and Zinoviev the head of the Communist International—they had to have a faithful, but politically harmless, man to whom they could entrust the administrative management of the Party affairs. Thus, the same considerations which guided Lenin in appointing Stalin to the General Secretaryship, made Kamenev and Zinoviev retain him in this position: they thought that a man of such low intellect and abilities would never become a serious political rival.

In January, 1924, Lenin died, and the question of leadership grew very acute. The heir apparent to the throne of the Red Dictator, Leon Trotsky, began to get rather restive, and the members of the triumvirate had to defend their position against this powerful claimant.

Stalin's position was the most precarious of all. Feeling that he would never return to active politics, Lenin, in January, 1923, wrote a letter, the

famous *Testament*, addressed to the plenary session of the Central Committee. In this letter he warned his comrades of the danger of a split in the Party and advised them to remove Stalin from the post of General Secretary and find a better man who 'would be more patient, more honest, more polite, more attentive to the comrades, less capricious, etc.' The shrewd old man thought that Stalin would abuse the power which he possessed as General Secretary of the Party.

The triumvirs were rather reluctant to publish this letter. Only four months after Lenin's death, in May, 1924, the document was reported to the meeting of the Central Committee. It was the most crucial moment in the whole of Stalin's political career: should the Central Committee have decided to follow the dead leader's advice Stalin would have sunk into obscurity once again, and thus would never have been able to assume the leadership of the Communist Party. It can be easily imagined how he, a proud and self-concentrated man, felt when the *Testament* was read.

The situation was saved by Zinoviev and Kamenev. Both made strong speeches in which they insisted that Lenin's fears had not been justified and that Stalin should not be removed from the post of General Secretary. The speeches were received rather coldly, and not one of the

members seemed willing to support the speakers. On the other hand no one dared to oppose them, and even Trotsky maintained a gloomy silence.

How he must have cursed himself for not having used his influence against Stalin at that crucial moment! His word would have given a lead to those members of the Central Committee who, out of reverence for Lenin and dislike for Stalin, would have voted the Georgian out of office. Later Trotsky wrote a good deal about his struggle for power with Stalin, but he never explained his silence at the fateful meeting of the Central Committee. The only possible explanation is that he shared the general opinion about Stalin and did not consider him to be a serious rival.

This meeting was also fateful in another sense. Stalin realized how precarious his personal position was in the Party and felt acutely the necessity for strengthening it. But, as the French say, *l'appétit vient en mangeant*. Struggle for the safety of his position soon led Stalin to the struggle for supreme power.

VII

Stalin Crushes Opposition

STALIN CRUSHES OPPOSITION

IT must not, however, be assumed that this struggle was brief and easy. Stalin had to tax his native cunning to the full and do a good deal of meticulous and methodical spade work before he was able to get rid of all his rivals.

The most dangerous enemy whom Stalin had to tackle first was Trotsky-Bronstein. Brilliant pamphleteer and fiery, though rather shallow, orator, this man possessed personality—the quality which the Georgian entirely lacked. He was considered to have been Lenin's right-hand man, and his name has always been linked with that of the teacher and master.

Trotsky enjoyed enormous popularity in the country and in the rank and file of the Communist Party, especially among the intellectuals of Jewish extraction, who formed a large and influential portion of the Party *élite*. His influence in the Red Army, which he helped to create, has also been considerable.

But Trotsky laboured under two distinct handicaps: in the past he was a Menshevik and thus

did not belong to the Bolshevik 'Old Guard,' and by temperament and previous training he was an ideologist living in the world of abstractions, and not a practical man of business. In his bid for supremacy Trotsky relied on his vigorous personality, on the sharpness of his pen, on the biting wit of eloquence, and neglected the dull, slow, and meticulous work of knocking his followers into a disciplined and loyal organization. His army was a loose body of guerrillas not fit to withstand the shock of a well-directed attack of trained troops.

Besides, owing to his quick Jewish perception and vivid imagination, Trotsky very often was prey to panic. More than once at the meetings of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party he declared that 'the Soviet Government is hanging by a thread,' and that 'the cuckoo has already tolled its knell.'¹

Stalin made good use of his rival's shortcomings. In private conversation with influential old Bolsheviks he persistently, though cautiously, reminded them of Trotsky's Menshevik past, and of the quarrels and altercations they used to have with him in Paris and Geneva cafés. In pre-revolutionary days Trotsky, a man of violent temper and venomous speech, trod on many corns

¹ STALIN. *Articles and Addresses*, p. 492.

and damaged many reputations. Very often he allowed his tongue to waggle imprudently. Among the old revolutionaries he was known as a man 'who speaks first and thinks afterwards.' Some of the old Bolsheviks—Zinoviev was one of them—hated Trotsky like poison. Playing on this hatred Stalin had little difficulty in fomenting distrust and hostility towards Trotsky among many old Bolsheviks.

Simultaneously Stalin set himself the task of enlarging and perfecting the system of management of the Communist Party, which he learned in Lenin's school. Refraining from interfering in squabbles and altercations which, from time to time, arose in the councils of the Party, he began systematically and unobtrusively to fill provincial Party and Soviet vacancies with men on whom he could absolutely rely in case of need. These men were instructed to do likewise within their own spheres. In this manner he, slowly but surely, was able to build up a system of 'wheels within the wheels,' and create a strong and obedient body of his personal followers in the ranks of the Party.

With the help of Zinoviev and Kamenev Stalin was able to deprive Trotsky of his posts in the Soviet administration, and, especially, replace him in the all-important post of War Commissar by his own henchman, Voroshilov. The sordid

story of this squabble was told in great detail by Trotsky himself in his books *My Life* and *The Revolution Betrayed*.

By the end of 1925 Stalin felt himself firmly in the saddle, and at the XIVth Congress of the Party, held in December of that year, he came into the open. At this Congress he figured as the official spokesman of the Central Committee, invested with authority and great responsibility. The old Bolsheviks realized how dangerous the man had become and launched a furious attack upon him. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Sokolnikov, and some other prominent leaders made strong speeches urging the Congress to reorganize the Party Secretariat and remove Stalin from the post of General Secretary.

But it was too late. The Congress was carefully 'packed' with Stalin's nominees who refused to listen to any such suggestions. The mood of the Congress was most clearly expressed by one of Stalin's own men, the late Kuibyshev: 'Comrade Stalin, who is the General Secretary of our Party, is the man who has succeeded in grouping around him the best elements of the Party and is drawing them into our work. . . . Such a General Secretary is what the Party must have in order to go from one victory to another.'¹

¹ *Verbatim Report of the XIVth Congress of the Party*, p. 119.

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At the same Congress Stalin made a very important declaration of principle. It must be remembered that the hopes for an early World Revolution were at that time at a low ebb. The attempts to start the conflagration had failed, and there was a persistent talk among the highly placed Communists on the necessity of relinquishing power.

Stalin challenged this defeatist attitude. 'Those who have lost faith in our cause,' he said, 'are liquidators. Of course, the sooner we receive help from the West the better . . . but even without foreign assistance we need not despair. We shall not abandon our task; we shall not be frightened by difficulties. Let those who are tired, who are afraid of obstacles, who hesitate, give way to those who have kept their courage and resolution.'¹ At the end of this speech Stalin uttered the new slogan of 'building up Socialism in one country.'

This pronouncement gave Trotsky, who had been by that time joined by Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rakovsky, Radek, Evdokimov, Smirnov, Piatakov, and many other prominent 'old Bolsheviks,' a chance to launch an energetic campaign against Stalin. Although the battle was fought on a highly ideological issue—World Communist Revo-

¹ *Verbatim Report*, p. 55.

lution versus Socialism in one country—in fact, it was the struggle for supremacy in the Party. In this struggle Stalin was supported by Bukharin, Molotov, Rykov, and Tomsy, who were nicknamed ‘Right-Wingers.’

Trotsky and his associates—the so-called ‘Left Opposition Block’—insisted that in its foreign policy the Communist Party should support the Communist parties of Europe and America in their efforts to seize power, and in its domestic policy—speed up industrialization, put pressure on the well-to-do peasants (the *kulaks*), and encourage the collective forms of agriculture.

As the events have proved, Stalin, at heart, fully shared these views. In 1928 he introduced the first Five Year Plan, in which all demands of the Left Opposition were embodied. But for the time being he opposed these views most resolutely, because this opposition gave him an opportunity of destroying his most dangerous rivals.

The battle ended in complete victory for Stalin. The ‘Left Opposition Block’ was smashed to bits, its leaders were shorn of any authority and either exiled, imprisoned, or delegated to subordinate positions in the Soviet administration (Kamenev, for instance, was appointed the chief of Concessions’ Committee when there were no

concessions given to the foreigners); its rank and file members were dispersed, imprisoned, exiled, and even executed.

As I have mentioned above, Stalin, having liquidated the Left Opposition, immediately began to introduce, even in a more radical form, political and economic reforms on which the Opposition insisted. Naturally, his former allies, 'the Right Wingers,' became a hindrance and a nuisance to him, and he decided to get rid of them too. This time his task was much easier because the 'Right Wingers' were men of much smaller calibre than his 'Left Wing' opponents, and because by that time Stalin had the whole Party apparatus in the hollow of his hand.

In the days of Lenin the Political Bureau of the Communist Party comprised Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomskey, and Stalin. What happened to these men picked by the Master himself?

In January, 1928, Trotsky was banished to Turkestan, and a year later deported from the U.S.S.R. to Turkey. Like a wandering Jew he travelled from one country to another until he found a safe refuge in far-away Mexico. Stalin branded him as a traitor and arch-enemy of Communist Revolution.

In 1935 Zinoviev, Lenin's *alter ego* of the Paris

and Geneva days, and the former President of the Communist International, was sent to gaol for ten years. In the same year Kamenev, the former Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. In August, 1936, both these men, together with fourteen other prominent 'Old Bolsheviks,' were accused of having attempted to organize a conspiracy against Stalin, in collusion with Trotsky and the German Nazis, and shot after a parody of a trial.

Tomsky, if the official announcement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party is to be believed, committed suicide because 'he became entangled in dealings with counter-revolutionary Trotskyist and Zinovievist terrorists.'

Bukharin, whom Lenin considered to be the most talented of his disciples, and used to call 'our Benjamin', and Rykov, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, in November, 1929, were driven from the leadership of the Party and 'isolated' from any participation in the Soviet Government. In March, 1938, they were brought before the Military Tribunal of the U.S.S.R., found guilty of high treason and complicity with Trotsky and the German Gestapo, and shot.

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As a result of the trials staged by Stalin, all Lenin's veterans, the men who made the Bolshevik Revolution twenty-two years ago, have been eliminated. The Central Committee of the Party, elected in August, 1917, was composed as follows : Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Nogin, Kollontai, Stalin, Sverdlov, Rykov, Bukharin, Artem, Uritsky, Miliutin, Berzin, Bubnov, Dzerzhinsky, Ioffe, Krestinsky, Muralov, Smilga, Sokolnikov, and Shaumian.

Of these men five—Lenin, Nogin, Sverdlov, Artem, and Dzerzhinsky—died natural deaths ; one—Uritsky—was shot by an anti-Soviet terrorist ; seven—Zinoviev, Kamenev, Muralov, Smilga, Bukharin, Rykov, and Krestinsky—were shot by Stalin ; four—Miliutin, Bubnov, Berzin, and Shaumian—have disappeared without leaving any trace ; one—Ioffe—was driven to commit suicide ; Trotsky is vegetating in Mexico ; Sokolnikov is undergoing a long term of imprisonment ; Mme Kollontai is kept in Stockholm as Soviet Ambassadors, deprived of any power and influence.

Stalin alone, surrounded by sycophants, mediocrities, and nonentities, remains in power which is really and truly absolute. He exterminated his former comrades and associates because he imagined that only he, of all men, knew how

to engineer the World Communist Revolution. This limitless self-assurance could be called Satanic, if it were not so absurdly stupid.

VIII

Stalin's Methods

STALIN'S METHODS

THE supreme power concentrated itself in Stalin's hands more or less automatically owing to the fact that, as time went on, the Communist Party began to assume more control over all the affairs of the country. And as the Communist Party is a highly centralized body, the ultimate authority, quite naturally, fell into the hands of the highest official of the Party, its General Secretary.

How does Stalin manage to maintain himself in power? His secret is very simple: he rules his crowd by a skilful handling of the Party machinery and by fear and terrorism. His methods of government may be described in a few words: he appoints to all the key positions in the Communist Party administration and in the Soviet Government, men absolutely dependent on him and blindly obedient to all his orders and instructions.

The highest authority in the Communist Party

nominally belongs to the Party Congress, which meets once in every three years. The Congress elects the Central Committee composed now of 72 members. This Committee meets for short sessions once in every three months. In the intervals the affairs of the Party and of the Soviet Government are managed by the Secretariat (4 members), the Organizational Bureau (9 members), and the Political Bureau (11 members). The actual personnel of these three bodies is, however, only 15, because some hold positions in more than one of them. Stalin, for instance, is the chairman of all these bodies.

The main thing, therefore, is 'to pack' the Congress with delegates who will vote obediently for the resolutions drafted by the Political Bureau, and elect only those men into the Central Committee who will make no trouble for the General Secretary. The control of the voting is easy, and any delegate who votes against Stalin is a doomed man. Everybody knows that, and the resolutions are passed unanimously.

Delegates to the Party Congress are elected by local organizations, and the elections are held under strict control and under surveillance of the secretaries of the provincial and district Party committees, who, being local 'bosses,' possess powerful means of exercising every kind of

pressure upon the rank and file. Therefore, in order to achieve full control over the Party and over the election of the Congress delegates, Stalin has only to fill the posts of provincial and district secretaries with his trusted and faithful agents, which he, as the General Secretary, has every facility to do.

How the Party congresses are 'packed' is shown in the example of the last (18th) Congress which was held in March, 1939. Preparations for this congress were started two years before. A regime of terrorism was introduced in the Party by means of the so-called 'purge of the Party.' In the progress of this purge all unreliable or doubtful elements were either expelled from the Party or brought to book in some other way. After this the 'packing' of the Congress was a simple enough matter. As the statistical data regarding the composition of the Congress shows, over 90 per cent of the delegates were either Party or Government officials, i.e. persons absolutely dependent on Stalin.

All men holding key positions in the Party and in the Soviet administration are closely watched. At the slightest sign of incompetence, slackness, disobedience, or unreliability, they are immediately deprived of their posts, and as these posts carry with them many very important privileges and

advantages the men, naturally, cling to them and do their best to retain Stalin's favour.

But Stalin has another most powerful weapon against anyone who dares to defy his authority or disobey his instructions. In Stalin's personal office there are carefully compiled files for each more or less prominent member of the Communist Party. The material for these files is collected by the Party Control Commission, a kind of Party inquisition, and by the O.G.P.U. As the past of almost every Communist is shady, and as almost every one of them, at one time or another, transgressed the rigid Party regulations or disregarded the rules of personal conduct, the revelations may be rather unpleasant. As soon as a Party member begins to show signs of disobedience or restiveness, compromising facts are brought before the Party tribunal and the culprit is faced with an official inquiry, expulsion from the Party, arrest, exile, and even death.

The net result of Stalin's dictatorship was that the Russian Communist Party ceased to exist as an independent social and political force, and degenerated into a motley crowd of 'yes-men,' blind and humble servants of their leader and master.

For years and years the Party members have been recruited from the worst elements of the peoples

of Russia. Men and women without religion, morals, spiritual culture and ideals, low scoundrels and adventurers, careerists who sought personal advantages from the privileged status of a Party member, flocked into the Party ranks, and elbowed out all those who joined it upon idealistic motives. All capable, honest, independent men are automatically driven out of the Party and replaced by the dregs of the nation who, for the sake of their careers and personal crude materialistic ambition, are ready to worship Stalin and carry out his most stupid and cruel orders. In their zeal to please their master the Communist officials very often overdo things, and owing to their ignorance, incompetence, inefficiency, and stupidity, grossly mismanage all the functions of the Government.

Cemented only by fear and by material considerations, the Party members are intriguing all the time against each other. No ties of common ideals or even comradeship bind them together. As the Russians say, the Communist Party under Stalin has become 'a corpse which they have forgotten to bury.'

IX

Stalin's Self-Advertisement

STALIN'S SELF-ADVERTISEMENT

BUT ruthless and merciless terrorism is not the only method which Stalin employs for imposing his absolute dictatorship upon the country. He resorts also to the more subtle method of self-advertisement. A vast State machinery, together with a powerful Communist Party organization, is working feverishly and incessantly in order to strengthen the prestige of the Dictator by propaganda and pressure.

All means devised by modern science and technique, and by human ingenuity—films, radio, photography, Press, art, etc.—are employed for the sole purpose of bringing home to the people the fact that Stalin is the wisest, greatest, most perfect, and the best beloved man on earth. Stalin is glorified in prose and verse, and at thousands of meetings, all organized on the same pattern, speakers in hundreds of languages and dialects sing flowery eulogies of praise to the most illustrious and virtuous ‘genius,’ ‘Father of the international proletariat,’ ‘the greatest of all men that have ever lived.’

Stalin is usually called 'Our Vozhd.' This Russian word is the exact equivalent of the German 'der Führer' and Italian 'Duce.'

'We are strong,' writes *Pravda*, 'by reason of our industrialization, our collective farming, our valiant Red Army, but our greatest strength, that which makes our country impregnable and invincible, lies in the union of the people with its Vozhd, Joseph Stalin.'¹

'Stalin is the architect of the tremendous edifice called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He is the source of all life in the Soviet Union. His thoughts set the whole mechanism of Soviet life in motion.'²

Sycophants proclaim Stalin to be a 'technical genius,' and unsurpassed master and expert in all the spheres of national economy and culture. Whether it is the gold output, mechanized bakeries, fruit growing, education, physical culture, public health, military strategy, the Moscow Underground, the White Sea-Baltic canal, tractors, aeroplanes, chemical factories—everything is directed by Stalin in person. All the achievements, scientific discoveries, literary works, musical compositions, etc., are due to the inspiration given by Stalin. He is acclaimed as 'the

¹ *Pravda*, May 21, 1935.

² *Ibid.*, January 15, 1935.

unsurpassed master of the Russian language,' and all the budding Soviet writers are pressed to study his literary style in order to bring their own writings to the highest standard. 'Look,' exclaims the well-known Soviet novelist Babel, 'how Stalin chisels his speeches, how finely wrought are his words ! We must labour to perfect the language as Stalin does.'¹

But what Stalin is particularly anxious about is to impress on the people a presumption that he is a most brilliant scholar and exponent of the Communist philosophical and sociological conceptions.

The explanation of this adulation of Stalin, which violates all sense of proportion and moderation, must be sought in the peculiar mentality of Stalin himself and of the people who accept Communist doctrine.

Many students of the Russian Revolution have come to the conclusion that Communism is a kind of perverted religion. In abstract philosophical sense this observation is quite true. While repudiating God and moral religious teachings the Communists, in their atheistic fervour, idolize materialism in its most crude, primitive form. Hence sprang the cult of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin as the infallible interpreters of all human

¹ *Ibid.*, February 1, 1935.

problems, the cult of machines and large-scale industries, the intolerance of everything that does not tally with Communist conceptions, fanaticism and narrowness of Communist mentality.

This mentality makes it imperative that a Communist leader must be first of all a fiery prophet of the Communist creed. Lenin's enormous influence and authority rested chiefly on the fact that he had been an acknowledged and accomplished Communist theorist, apart from having been a subtle practical politician.

Stalin fully understood the mentality of his followers. Therefore, when he crushed the 'Left' and 'Right' opposition, he began to establish his reputation as the only living infallible interpreter of the Communist creed. He felt that his position would be secure if only he could become the recognized Head of the Communist Church.

It must be admitted that he succeeded in his design, ostensibly at any rate. When they want in Russia to describe the up-to-date essence of Communism, they use the term 'Stalinism,' or a compound word 'Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism.' Everyone who dares to criticize Stalin's theoretical writings is sure to come to grief. In 1932 one of the young Bolshevik historians, Slutsky, writing on the revolution of 1905, discovered that Stalin's views at that time had been far from being

orthodox. The man was immediately expelled from the Party, deprived of his post, and finally committed suicide, being unable to withstand the abuse and persecutions showered upon him.

At present Stalin is not only the temporal head of the Communist State, but also supreme spiritual authority. In this respect he is even superior to the Head of the Roman Catholic Church : while His Holiness the Pope can claim only the property of infallibility, Stalin is impeccable. Everything he says or does is absolutely and unquestionably right. He cannot do wrong under any circumstances.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Stalin has forsaken that spirit of plebeian simplicity which had been encouraged by Lenin, and created around himself an atmosphere of almost Oriental splendour. When he appears at any public gathering the whole audience stands up and indulges in a thunderous ovation, which is to last not less than three minutes. An account of Stalin's appearance at the VIIth Congress of the Soviets gives an idea of the ritual adopted on such occasions.

'At 6.15 p.m. Comrade Stalin appears. All the delegates rise as one man and greet him with a stormy and prolonged ovation. From all parts of the hall come the shouts of " Long live the

great Stalin," "Long live our Vozhd." A new outburst of applause and greetings. Comrade Kalinin declares the Congress open, and reminds the audience that it is Comrade Stalin who is the instigator, inspirer, and organizer of the whole gigantic work of the Soviet Union. A new storm of applause passing into an endless ovation. The entire assembly rises and greets Stalin. Cries of "Long live Stalin! Hurrah!"¹

In all the appeals and resolutions passed at the Communist gatherings, Stalin is addressed in the second person singular—"Thou." "We greet in thy person the glorious leader of the international proletariat!" This formula is common in all such addresses.

The adulation of Stalin is servile to the extreme. One must look back to the times of Egyptian pharaohs or Assyrian kings to find anything similar. "Thy speech illumines our path like a lode-star," wrote the inhabitants of Daghestan (in the Caucasus) to Stalin. "If the songs of our bards delight thy ears—take them. If the statues and pictures of our artists gladden thy eye—accept them. If our lives are needed by thee for the defence of the Fatherland—take them. We have but one desire: that our humble message should reach thy ears. When we think

¹ *Pravda*, January 16, 1935.

that thou, Stalin, wilt read these lines, our muscles are filled with strength, our heads are lifted up, our eyes shine with the brightness of youth.¹

It must not be imagined, however, that only the Oriental subjects of the 'Socialist' Soviet State address Stalin in such grandiloquent servile style. The Europeans are not less incredibly servile. A striking specimen of such servility has been supplied by the Russian writer Avdeienko in the speech delivered at the VIIth Congress of the Soviets.

'Centuries will pass,' said this sycophant, 'the future Communist generations will think us the happiest of all mortals through the ages, for we have seen Stalin. . . . I love a girl in a new way, I am perpetuated in my children. They will be happy—all this is thanks to thee, O great teacher Stalin. Our love, our devotion, our strength, our hearts, our heroism, our lives—all are thine. Take them, Great Stalin—all is thine, O leader of this great country. People of all times and all nations will give thy name to everything that is fine and strong, to all that is wise and beautiful. Thy name has and shall have a place in every corner of the earth, in every human heart. When the woman I love gives me a child the first word I will teach it shall be—Stalin.'²

¹ *Pravda*, June 24, 1935.

² *Ibid.*, February 1, 1935.

Knowing the character and mentality of Stalin, his satanic egotism and pride, I am sure he enjoys to hear and read such expressions of abject servility. Bukharin was quite right when he said that 'we dreamt of Bonaparte's despotism, and have woken up under the tyranny of Cambiz.' Stalin seems to be convinced that his unparalleled self-advertising campaign does win for him the sincere admiration of his subjects, and he gets involuntarily hypnotized by the innumerable eulogies addressed to him.

But what do the Russians really think of Stalin? In the complete absence of all freedom of speech and of the Press, it is impossible to decide whether the adoration offered to him is really sincere or only a calculated exhibition of servility to appease and please the tyrant. I have good reason to believe, however, that the people hate Stalin most bitterly, because they see in him the principal cause of all their sufferings.

The Bolshevik Revolution may have succeeded in destroying many material and spiritual values in Russia. But what the Bolsheviks have utterly failed to do is to kill the sense of humour inherent in the Russian national character. On the contrary, never before in the history of Russia was there such a rich outcrop of humorous stories, tales, anecdotes, jokes, and verses circulating

throughout the breadth and length of the country.

And there is very good reason for it. The Communists have muzzled the Press and every other means of expressing independent opinion. No one in Soviet Russia would dare to utter a word of genuine indignation or criticism in public. Even in private conversations one must be very careful and hold one's tongue. A succinct joke, a short anecdote, or a four-line doggerel are easy to remember and easy to pass on, and they tell, more eloquently and convincingly than the volumes of statistics, what the people really think of the Soviet regime and its leaders.

The great mass of this modern Russian folklore is an expression of protest against the Communist rule. Thousands and thousands of humorous tales and verses are spread now in Russia by word of mouth. Biting doggerels are sung by urchins in the streets of Russian towns, by peasants in the fields, by workers in the factories. Jokes are repeated in food queues, in offices, in shops, and are whispered into friends' ears in the homes of Soviet citizens.

A large number of these jokes refer to Stalin, and practically all of them are variations of one and the same theme—Stalin's death. I reproduce below some specimens of this humour.

The letters S.S.S.R. (Russian abbreviation for the U.S.S.R.) are deciphered as 'Smert Stalina Spaset Rossiia' (Death of Stalin will Save Russia).

Standing in front of his own portrait Stalin asks himself: 'I wonder what will happen next?' and the portrait answers: 'I know. I will be taken down and you will be hung up.'

At a meeting of the Political Bureau the critical position of the U.S.S.R. was discussed. The question arose what was to be done in order to avert the threatening calamity, and one of the members suggested that Stalin should be hanged. He gave three reasons for this suggestion: the hanging of Stalin will please the Russian people, it will produce a most favourable impression in Europe, and will cost very little.

A man enters a stationer's shop and asks the assistant to show the pictures of Soviet leaders. The assistant spreads his wares on the counter. 'Here we have "Lenin in the garden," "Voroshilov on horseback," "Kalinin on the platform." . . . ' 'Yes,' says the customer. 'They are very good. But could you get for me the picture of "Stalin in the coffin?"'

Stalin was bathing in a stream and got into difficulties. A passing peasant dragged the drowning Stalin to the river-bank. 'Now,' said

Stalin. 'Ask whatever you wish. Your desire is granted in advance. I am Stalin.' 'Little father,' wailed the peasant, 'I don't want anything, but please don't tell anyone that I have saved you. They will murder me for that.'

It seems to me that these popular stories and jokes reflect the true feelings of the Russian people towards the Red Dictator much more faithfully than the flowery servile addresses and speeches.

X

Pen-Portrait of Stalin

PEN-PORTRAIT OF STALIN

IT would appear that sufficient material has been produced to justify an attempt to draw Stalin's pen-portrait.

The basic features of Stalin's character are : secretiveness, cunning, and revengefulness. During his revolutionary training, when he had to carry his freedom and life in his hands, he learned to keep his mouth shut. An air of grave moroseness always hangs about Stalin and it is impossible to read his thoughts and emotions in his dull heavy haze or in his coarse immobile face. Never does he discuss his plans with anyone, even with his nearest assistants.

As I have mentioned, he speaks Russian very badly, and hates to speak in public. All his public speeches are written down for him by his secretaries, and his delivery is poor and ineffective. He is a very inefficient debater and is almost incapable of making a coherent impromptu speech. Stalin is rather fond of using strong language, and as the Russian tongue is particularly rich in this respect, the vigorousness of the

language sometimes passes for vigorousness of thought, and produces the effect sought by the speaker.

Stalin's cunning is profound. In this respect his mentality is characteristically Oriental. He may lie low for a long time and then strike hard when his plans are matured. The treacherousness of his nature was known to the old Bolsheviks long ago. Lenin, for instance, used to say about Stalin: 'Watch Stalin carefully. He is always ready to betray you.'

And the old man had very good reasons for uttering this warning. Stalin was known in the old days to have always led a double conspiracy: one against the Tsarist Government, and another—against his rivals within the Party. In 1906, when one of his closest associates, K. Tsintsadze, dared to oppose Stalin, he was arrested by the Okhrana and died in Siberia, forgotten and forsaken by his comrades. There is very strong reason for believing that Stalin betrayed him to the police and then spread rumours amongst the Party members that Tsintsadze had been a police spy.¹

On another occasion Stalin quarrelled violently with Shaumian, a hot-tempered but sincere and honest man. Soon afterwards Shaumian was

¹ NOAH DZHORDANIA. *Op. cit.*

arrested under circumstances which threw a strong suspicion on Stalin. Shaumian himself was absolutely sure that he had been betrayed to the police by Stalin. He had a secret refuge where he occasionally slept. The address of this refuge was known only to Stalin and to no one else. When Shaumian was interrogated by the police they asked him about this refuge. Who could have revealed Shaumian's secret but Stalin ?¹

Stalin is an extremely revengeful man. He never forgets or forgives an offence committed against him or even a harsh word spoken to him. This side of his character is revealed in a story told by Trotsky.²

In the summer of 1924 Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, and Kamenev spent an evening together, drinking and chatting. The conversation turned on the topic—what each of them liked most. Stalin said : ' The sweetest thing in life is to mark a victim, prepare the blow carefully, strike hard, and then go to bed and sleep peacefully.'

Of course, Trotsky is a biased witness, but this particular testimony of his rings true : such an Oriental sentiment is quite in keeping with the character of Stalin.

² NOAH DZHORDANIA. Op. cit.

¹ *Opposition Bulletin*, No. 52/53, October, 1936. Paris.

Stalin's moral sense is atrophied. His favourite saying and moral maxim is : ' Everything is moral if the Revolution can profit by it.' As he considers himself the only true interpreter of the aims and purposes of the Revolution, this formula, in practice, means that he is a moral law unto himself.

An incident which occurred in the early days of his revolutionary career may throw some light on this side of Stalin's character. A group of the Seminary students agreed to publish an illegal school magazine. The school authorities soon learned of the project and, in order to stop the publication, arranged for the wholesale search of the students. A manuscript of an article was found on Stalin and he was taken to task by the senior master, Abashidze.

The result of the interrogation was that the would-be editor and two principal contributors to the magazine were expelled from the Seminary, while Stalin was allowed to continue his studies and was not even deprived of the scholarship grant.

Naturally, a suspicion arose that Stalin had betrayed his colleagues. A court of inquiry was instituted. Stalin quite frankly admitted the fact of the betrayal but pleaded justification. He said : " You see. Should they have been allowed

to continue their education, they would have turned out mere priests and thus would have been lost for ever to the revolutionary cause. Now they must join the revolutionary movement and become faithful revolutionaries because no other career has been left open to them."

Curiously enough, this plea made such an impression on the judges that Stalin was acquitted.

Stalin is a cruel man. His cruelty is of a cold calculating kind. Utter disregard for the intrinsic value of human life, for the sufferings of human beings, makes of him a most ruthless and merciless tyrant.

People who used to know Stalin well affirm that he has always lacked personal courage. He was brave and bold enough when he knew that the only risk he had to run was that of imprisonment or exile. But he was reluctant to risk his skin and never took any actual participation in the hold-ups he planned. Noah Dzjordania, whose reminiscences of Stalin I have already quoted, says :

' Stalin always kept himself out of danger and stayed behind. I remember one occasion very well. In 1907 they dug a tunnel in order to steal money from the provincial treasury at Gori. Stalin was the chief organizer of this venture, but he never went to see how the work was proceeding.

When the job was finished, Stalin was requested by his confederates to crawl into the tunnel in order to ascertain whether the work had been done in accordance with the plan. Stalin refused. He was afraid that the earth would fall down and bury him.¹

Cowards are usually cruel. Should not we seek the explanation of Stalin's exceptional cruelty in his lack of courage? Tortured by physical fear he tries to save his skin by murdering all those whom he suspects, rightly or wrongly, of harbouring insidious designs against him. Stalin's cowardice is confirmed also by the most elaborate measures which are taken to protect him from assassination.

While in Moscow he lives in the Kremlin, the walled city in the heart of the capital. All the gates and entrances are strongly guarded by the picked OGPU troops. To enter the Kremlin one must have a special pass signed and countersigned by several authorities. This pass is to be shown at every door through which the visitor passes.

Private apartments and the offices of Stalin are guarded by young men recruited especially for the purpose from the semi-barbaric tribe of Adzhary. They do not speak any other language

¹ NOAH DZHORDANIA. *Op. cit.*

but their own little-known dialect. If any one of them gets permission to go outside the Kremlin, two OGPU agents accompany him and watch all his movements.

In summer Stalin lives in a country place, Gorki, some twenty miles from Moscow. The place is surrounded by several rows of barbed-wire charged with electricity. Many cunningly concealed posts are constructed in the neighbouring woods. The road leading from Moscow to Gorki is also closely guarded and very often closed for ordinary traffic altogether. Stalin's bullet-proof saloon-car is always accompanied by several cars of the same make. They are driven in procession, and it is absolutely impossible to know which of them carries the precious person of the dictator.

All the food for Stalin and his family is prepared by specially selected cooks. It is tested for various poisons and put in special containers which are sealed by a trusted OGPU official. The seals are broken only on the table, immediately before the dishes are served.

It might be said without exaggeration that Stalin's person is guarded more jealously than the person of any king or emperor has ever been guarded. The guardians employ for this purpose every measure which human ingenuity can invent.

Morose, taciturn, suspicious, and revengeful, Stalin had never any personal friends even in the old days when common ideals and common dangers provided a natural and congenial atmosphere for forming ties of close friendship among revolutionaries. Since his advent to power only a few Georgians, his associates of the Tsarist days, and such men as Voroshilov and Kaganovich, meet Stalin on a more or less equal footing, and the only outsider whom Stalin occasionally visited was the late Maxim Gorky, 'the father of Soviet literature.'

In his family relations Stalin is a typical despot. When he got tired of his first wife, a very common Georgian woman, whom he married in 1905, he simply dismissed her without much ceremony and forbade her to mention that she had ever been married to him.

In 1929 Stalin sent away in disgrace his eldest son, then a boy of twenty-two. He wanted the boy to become an engineer, but the young man showed little inclination to follow his father's wishes, and was rather backward in his studies. Besides, he fell in love with a girl of 'bourgeois' descent and insisted on marrying her.

Stalin got very angry with the boy and not only expelled him from the family, but even ordered him to assume another name. The young man is

now living somewhere in the provinces, working as an ordinary clerk in a government office.

Coarse, rude, unruly in his temper, unmindful of other people's pride and feelings, brutal, vehement in his language, Stalin is a difficult man to live with. These qualities of his character were the real cause of the death of his second wife, Nadezhda Alliluieva.

It was known in Moscow that Alliluieva did not die from an attack of appendicitis, as it was announced officially, but that she committed suicide. The actual circumstances of her death, however, were little known. I am able to give here the true and accurate story of this minor tragedy.

In the beginning of November, 1932, Voroshilov gave an informal reception to his intimate friends at his Moscow house. Stalin and Alliluieva were also present. It will be remembered that Soviet Russia at that time was passing through a critical period: the crops were very bad, and a vast number of peasants in the southern provinces were dying of famine and epidemics, while a state of semi-starvation reigned in the towns. It was evident that this state of affairs had been produced by the policy of collectivization and industrialization pursued by Stalin with much violence, cruelty, and persistence.

In passing, it is worth while to record here Stalin's personal reaction on the Ukrainian famine.

One of his trusted men was sent to the stricken provinces to make investigations into the dimensions of the calamity. He returned to Moscow absolutely stunned by what he had seen and heard. People were dying like autumn flies, and there were officially registered numerous cases of cannibalism.

All this was reported to Stalin, who heard the news with perfect equanimity. His only comment was: 'Let 'em eat each other. Otherwise they might have eaten up us.'

Alliluieva was a kind-hearted little woman. Mixing with common people more freely than her husband, she saw the sufferings of the people and sympathized with them. Many times in her intimate talks with Stalin she tried to persuade him of the necessity of modifying his policy.

The conversation at Voroshilov's naturally turned to the food conditions, and Alliluieva, an outspoken and sharp-tongued woman, criticized her husband's policy rather bitterly. Enraged by such frank criticism made in public, Stalin lost his temper, and in an extremely coarse and rude manner told his wife to hold her tongue. Offended by this sharp rebuke Alliluieva immediately left without saying good-bye to anyone. She

went to her apartment in the Kremlin, arriving there at about 2 a.m., and at once went to her bedroom.

Her agitation was noticed by the servants, who reported to the chief of the Kremlin guard. This officer, in his turn, rung up Enukidze, Stalin's family friend. The latter, who was already in bed, knowing the excitable character of Alliluieva, did not pay any attention to the report.

At half-past four in the morning the servants heard a pistol shot from Alliluieva's room. They tried to enter the room, but the door was locked and there was no sound inside. The door was forced open, and they found Alliluieva on the floor shot through the head. A sealed letter addressed to Stalin lay on the table. Stalin, who had gone to Gorki, was telephoned for. Nobody knows the contents of Alliluieva's letter : Stalin destroyed it.

Stalin's grief, however, was short-lived : in less than a year's time he married the younger sister of his trusted lieutenant, Kaganovich. It was reported in the English papers in June, 1937, that Stalin had divorced her and was going to marry Irene Sebioff, a forty-two-year-old widow, an official of the Commissariat of Heavy Industries. But this sensational report turned out to be a journalistic *canard*.

Stories about Stalin's intemperance and dissipation, his fondness of women, and good living, which from time to time appear in the foreign Press, are products of the vivid imagination of some unscrupulous journalists and sensation-mongers. Stalin is a temperate man and drinks only the sour wine of his native Kahetia. Unlike many of his party comrades he is indifferent to women. Equally indifferent is he to food, clothes, and other amenities of life.

As a man of poor education and of low intellectual culture he is unable to enjoy refined pleasures of art. His only distraction is opera, where he goes as often as his work allows him. They say that Bizet's *Carmen*, with its noisy and boisterous music, is his favourite piece. Since Kirov's murder in December, 1934, Stalin has never been seen in a theatre.

As far as general knowledge is concerned, Stalin is an extremely ignorant man. He does not know any European language, his knowledge of the world and of Russian literature is rudimentary, and it is doubtful whether he has ever read any history book except the school textbooks.

But what, perhaps, is more astonishing still is his hopeless ignorance of economics. Quite genuinely he seems to believe that all economic knowledge is contained in those Marxist formulae

which he learned in his youth. Even when he had enough time he had hardly read anything but the popular Marxist literature. Generally speaking, Stalin is essentially a man of action, and he has always had a Napoleon's contempt for intellectuals. At present, of course, he has little time to read anything but numerous official reports.

Stalin is dull and a slow thinker, but he is persistent in his notions. He is an extremely obstinate man. This obstinacy is often taken for strong, unbending will-power. It is a great mistake. Stalin, really, is not strong-willed, but obstinate, sometimes to the extremes of sheer stupidity.

The qualities of Stalin's mind, generally, are such as are usually associated with the mind of a peasant. He is almost incapable of abstract reasoning, or of broad, all-embracing generalizations, and he is absolutely lacking in imagination. In his philosophical outlook he is a pragmatist and estimates any fact or assertion solely by its practical bearing upon primitive instincts and the baser side of human nature. His outstanding mental characteristic—cunningness—is that of a sly Asiatic peasant.

Lenin was aware of this characteristic. He used to call Stalin 'a wonderful Georgian with the soul of an Asiatic despot.' Stalin himself

admits his Asiatic affinity. 'I am an Asiatic, too,' said he to a Japanese interviewer.

There is more of a destroyer than of a creator in Stalin's character and mentality. In this respect he cannot be compared either with Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great, or even with Lenin. These three outstanding personalities in the history of Russia were ruthless and cruel enough, but their work had a distinctive creative quality, while Stalin has created very little and has destroyed a good many things.

XI

Economic Conditions

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

THE history of the last eleven years, during which time the leadership of the Communist Party and the stewardship of Russia were entirely in Stalin's hands, shows that as a statesman Stalin has proved himself a failure. He has succeeded only in enslaving and impoverishing the Russian people and in instilling in their minds feelings of bitter hatred towards himself and the Soviet regime.

What is Russia nowadays? In the course of the last 300 years she has never been in such an abominably miserable state as she is now.

First, let us examine briefly the economic conditions. The state of agriculture, the staple industry of Russia, is such that the Russians now, even in a good year, experience shortage of almost all food products. In comparison with the pre-revolutionary times the standard of nutrition of the people has declined considerably. According to figures given by a distinguished English economist, Mr. Colin Clark, the quantities of principal foodstuffs consumed per head of popula-

tion were valued at £10 18s. in 1913 and at £8 8s. in 1934, or 22 per cent less.¹ The figures for the latest years are not available, but there is no reason to suppose that the conditions have improved appreciably.

The area of cereals under cultivation in 1913 on the territory comprising the present U.S.S.R., was 102·7 million hectares, and in 1938 100·5 million hectares (official figures), although the population, during the interval, has increased by at least 30 million. As the mean yield of grain per hectare is now approximately the same as in 1913 it is evident that the quantity of grain products per head of population is now considerably less.

The decrease in animal products, such as meat, fats, eggs, milk, butter, is even more pronounced. The number of domestic animals was as follows (million heads):

	1913	1935
Horses . . .	35·8	15·9
Cattle . . .	60·6	49·3
Sheep . . .	113·0	61·1
Pigs . . .	20·9	22·5

It is obvious that in comparison with the Czarist times the standard of nutrition of the Russians

¹ COLIN CLARK. *A Critique of Russian Statistics*. Macmillan & Co., London, 1939, p. 25.

must at present be much worse because there are more mouths to feed and less foodstuffs to go round. According to Mr. Clark, the quantity of meat and fats consumed in 1913 per head per week was 16.8 ozs., and in 1934, 6.9 ozs. The consumption of milk and milk products, correspondingly, was 112.5 ozs. and 76 ozs.¹

According to the Soviet official figures the production of meat per head of population was in 1936 2½ kilograms, butter and vegetable oils—10 kilograms, sugar—7 kilograms, tinned foods—2 kilograms. In 1913 the consumption of meat was estimated at 17 kilograms, and of sugar—12 kilograms.²

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Russians, under the 'benevolent' rule of Stalin, live on the very brink of starvation. When the crops fail, as happened in 1932-1933, acute famine sets in. During these two years at least ten million, probably more, perished of hunger and diseases caused by starvation. In 1936 the famine occurred again, though on a lesser scale.

A full belly is undoubtedly one of the most necessary prerequisites of prosperity. But the Russians, blessed with the Soviet regime, go about hungry. To suggest that they are happy

¹ COLIN CLARK. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

² *Plan*, January 10, 1937. Moscow.

and content is against the essentials of human nature. No sane person can believe it.

Since 1929, great efforts have been made by the Soviets to industrialize the country. Vast sums have been expended on the construction of many giant factories equipped with up-to-date machinery. But the practical results are extremely meagre. Although the production of goods (mostly investment goods and not commodities) has increased in comparison with the pre-war period, this increase has been practically wiped out by the deterioration of the quality of the goods produced. Besides, the production of even pig-iron, steel, and coal per head of population is still lagging far behind the other countries, as Stalin himself has openly acknowledged in the speech he made on March 10, 1939, at the Communist Congress in Moscow.¹

On the other hand, owing to bad management a large number of new factories and works constructed during the last ten years is still far from being in good working order and their production programmes are not fulfilled. Thus, the capital expended on the construction of these factories and their equipment is 'frozen' and the country has been unable to reap the benefit which should have accrued from this investment.

¹ *Izvestia*, March 11, 1939.

On account of all that a shortage of every kind of commodity is felt very acutely in the U.S.S.R. According to the Soviet statistics, in 1936 the production of cotton piece goods was 9 metres, linen; 0.63 metres, woollen cloth; 0.15 m., silk; 0.20 m., soap; 3 kilograms, footwear; *one* leather shoe and *one* rubber overshoe per head of population.¹

No latest figures are available, but judging by the reports which appear in the Press, the production programmes in 1937 have been carried out very incompetently and the output has remained practically stationary.² Similar reports, often signed by People's Commissars and other responsible Soviet officials, can be found in the Soviet papers of 1938 and 1939.

The net economic results of the much-advertised Five Year Plans are amply summed up in a joke which now enjoys great popularity in Russia. Question: What is the difference between candies and Five Year Plans? Answer: Candies—we eat 'em; the Five Year Plans—they eat us.

Being a vast continental country Russia, in her economic life, depends to a very great extent on her overland transport. The construction of new railways and the maintenance of the old ones is

¹ *Plan*, January 10, 1937.

² *Izvestia*, June 29, 1937.

of paramount importance to her. But by all accounts the Soviet railways are in a shocking state. The repairs of permanent ways are lagging far behind the scheduled requirements, the number of engines is inadequate, the rolling stock is insufficient, the number of smashes and accidents is enormous.

The figures in respect of ton-mileage carried by the railways show that the overland transport is densely congested and the railways, even in peacetime, cannot cope with the necessary traffic of goods and passengers.¹

The financial position of the U.S.S.R. is also precarious. How could it be otherwise? The value of Soviet paper currency, if expressed in the terms of gold, is at least twenty times below the pre-revolutionary standard. Mr. Colin Clark estimates, very liberally, the present purchasing power of the Soviet rouble at 3·5 pence instead of 25 pence in 1913. Another observer, Sir Walter Citrine, puts it even lower, i.e. at 2 pence.²

The Soviet Treasury is able to balance the budget only because the indirect taxation in the U.S.S.R. is extremely high. For instance, the tax on bread represents about 90 per cent of the retail price of the commodity.

Productivity of labour is now considerably less

¹ COLIN CLARK. *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

than in 1913. According to Mr. C. Clark, in 1913 an able-bodied person engaged in agriculture or in industry produced £58·10 worth of goods per annum, while the corresponding figure for 1934 was £51, or nearly 15 per cent less. I might mention here, for comparison's sake, that the production per occupied person in Great Britain in 1934 was estimated at £211 per annum.¹

There is another yard-stick by which we can measure the economic development of a country, namely, the so-called national income. This income in Russia, in 1913, was estimated at £20 2s. per head of population, and in 1934 at £19 6s., or 4 per cent less (in Great Britain it was in 1934, £88 5s.).²

I think, however, that this estimate is far too optimistic. It does not take into account two very important factors : the general unreliability of the Soviet statistics on which it is based, and the extremely low quality of goods produced by the Soviet industry. It is obvious that a pair of boots, for instance, which lasts six months, must have a higher value than a pair which lasts a couple of months only. In my opinion, the national income per head of population in the U.S.S.R. is approximately 25 or 30 per cent lower than in 1913.

¹ COLIN CLARK. *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

The data in regard to the standard of living give a fair idea of the deterioration in economic conditions which took place in Russia between 1913 and 1937. The population of the Soviet Union is composed now of three principal social groups : (1) manual workers occupied in industry, transport, and other non-agricultural trades ; (2) non-manual or black-coated workers employed by the State in various capacities such as civil servants, teachers, clerks, engineers, technicians, etc. ; (3) agricultural workers or peasants employed at the State or collective farms.

The mean monthly wages of the first group were, in 1937—the latest year for which the full data are available—about 217 roubles. If we accept the optimistic estimate of the purchasing power of a rouble at 3·5 pence, we will find that the real wages in the U.S.S.R. are now roughly 14 shillings a week ! But those are mean wages. In other words, there are groups which get higher wages and those who earn less than the average. A more detailed study shows that out of 17·2 million industrial workers, only 1·2 million earned 30 shillings a week or more, of the rest, 93 per cent, got much less, some as little as 10 or 8 shillings a week.

The total number of black-coated workers in the U.S.S.R. in 1937 was 9·3 million. The mean

salaries of civil servants, teachers, clerks, etc., were 3,085 roubles a year, or, in English equivalent, 16s. 8d. a week. Engineers and technicians received, on the average, 6,502 roubles a year, or £1 12s. 6d. a week. Again, in this group only about 20 per cent earned above the average, the rest had to be content with 20 shillings a week, or even less.

The earnings of sixty-odd million peasants are very difficult to ascertain. A rough calculation shows that only 5 per cent of them earn enough to meet their daily needs. Poverty and starvation is the lot of the rest.¹

¹ All the statistics concerning wages in the U.S.S.R. are borrowed from the official Soviet publication, *The Statistical Report for 1937*, Moscow, 1939. Equivalents in English money are calculated by the author.

XII

Social Conditions

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

THE social conditions in the U.S.S.R. are also very bad. There is an appalling shortage of housing accommodation. In Moscow, for instance, the floor space occupied by each inhabitant is 5 square yards only, that is to say, in a room of 5 yards by 6 yards, not less than six persons are herded together. This terrible overcrowding produces all sorts of evil results. The worst of them is the impossibility for the people to get enough rest: people in the U.S.S.R. very often sleep only two hours a day.

The standard of education is very low. The schools are overcrowded, and the lack of school buildings is so great that in 90 per cent of the elementary schools the classes are being held in three shifts a day. There is terrible shortage of qualified teachers, textbooks, exercise-books, paper, pencils, pens, ink, etc.

Health services are entirely inadequate. The number of hospitals is insufficient for the country's needs. They are run inefficiently, and very often serve as dispensers of various diseases. The

training of the doctors is very poor. There is a shortage of medicines, and even in Moscow it is often absolutely impossible to obtain such simple remedies as iodine, aspirin, purgatives, or bandages. All the medical instruments and appliances are of such bad quality that it is hardly possible to use them.

The authorities themselves admit that their medical service leaves much to be desired. Kaminsky, the People's Commissar for Public Health, agreed that, early in 1936, there were in Moscow only 6·3 hospital beds per 1000 inhabitants, while in 1913 there were 7·3 beds. At the same period, also in Moscow, there were 5000 rachitic children in need of hospital treatment, but the number of beds available for them in all the Moscow hospitals was only 65.¹

Rest homes and health resorts are used only by the privileged persons belonging to the Communist Party, or occupying better paid posts in the Soviet bureaucracy. In 1937 the rest homes could accommodate 1,800,000, and the health resorts—320,000 persons a year. As the total number of industrial workers and the State employees—excluding their families—was 27 million, the percentage of those lucky people

¹ *Izvestia*, February 6 and 28, 1936.

who could use the rest homes and sanatoria was only 8.¹

It must not be imagined that living in these establishments is free of charge. On the contrary, the charges are exorbitant. For instance, in the Crimean and the North Caucasian sanatoria, each visitor is to pay for his lodgings and food from 657 to 970 roubles a month. Naturally, the rank and file workers cannot afford such extravagant charges.

Altogether, out of 170 million people living at present in the U.S.S.R., only 7 or 8 per cent can boast of being able to keep body and soul together. Poverty and serfdom is the lot of the great majority of the population.

The Communists and their admirers all over the world preach that Soviet Russia, having rid herself of 'capitalist exploiters,' has attained an unprecedented standard of economic prosperity and achieved real social justice. The truth is that there is no economic prosperity and equality, and no social justice in the land of the Soviets. As a matter of fact, economic and social differentiation in the U.S.S.R. is much more pronounced than it had been under the Tsars, and is much more acute than in any capitalist country.

¹ *The Statistical Report for 1937.*

XIII

Political Conditions

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

A GOOD deal has been said and written in this country and elsewhere about the new Soviet Constitution inaugurated in December, 1936. This Constitution was declared to be the most up-to-date democratic instrument of government. Let us examine briefly its essential features.

The Soviet adherents maintain that the U.S.S.R., under this Constitution, is a decentralized State in which various component republics have a wide measure of self-government. The opposite, however, is the truth. The U.S.S.R. is a highly centralized, unitary State and not a federation of autonomous units. The Central Government, under Article 14 of the Constitution, has the right of decision in all the most important matters affecting the life of the State: international representation, military matters, trade, police, national economy, finance, transport, money and credit, education and public health, civil and criminal law.

The republics which form the Soviet Union are completely dependent on the central Govern-

ment, because they are deprived of the right to impose and collect taxes, this being a prerogative of the central Government. They possess practically no sovereignty whatever.

According to the new Constitution the supreme organ of the Government is the Supreme Council, composed of two houses—the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities. The first of these two councils is elected by all the citizens of the U.S.S.R. on a basis of universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage, at the rate of one deputy per 300,000 of population.

But there is in the U.S.S.R. only one organized political body which has the rights of a political party—the Communist Party. Under Article 141 of the Constitution only this Party and those organizations—trade unions and co-operative societies—in which the Party predominates, may put forward candidates. At the last election, held in 1937, only one candidate, nominated by the Communist Party, was put forward in each constituency, and voters had no other choice but to give their votes to this candidate. Thus, the Soviet 'Parliament' is exactly the same 'packed' body as the German Reichstag or the Italian Chamber.

The Council of Nationalities is composed of representatives nominated by the federated and

autonomous republics and regions of which the U.S.S.R. is composed, in the proportion of 10 deputies for each federated republic, 5 for each autonomous republic, and 2 for each region. Again, this House is also very easy to 'pack' with men and women entirely dependent on the central Government.

Both councils meet twice a year for short sessions lasting only a few days. No serious business can possibly be transacted during these brief periods and, as the sessions held in 1938 and 1939 have proved, the legislation passed by them was confined to approval, in wholesale manner, of the laws introduced by the Government during the intervals between the sessions.

The Supreme Council appoints the Præsidium, which has the power to interpret the existing laws and pass new legislation. The new laws have to be approved by the Council, but in the meantime they possess the full legal force. The Præsidium also appoints the central administrative body, the Council of People's Commissaries. In practice, the Supreme Council and its Præsidium are the instruments through which Stalin imposes his will on the country. The new Constitution has made no changes in the political system of the Soviet Union, and Stalin's dictatorship remains unimpaired.

Little can be said about civic liberties in the U.S.S.R. For religion there is no freedom of propagation, instruction, education, or social activities. This freedom is reserved for atheism. But the absence of religious freedom presupposes the absence of freedom of opinion and inquiry. The only philosophical teaching which is allowed and even imposed on the people by the authorities is the so-called Dialectical Materialism or vulgarized Marxism. All schools of idealistic philosophy as well as all other methods of philosophical inquiry are suppressed. Anyone who would dare to criticize or oppose Marxism is liable to the most cruel forms of persecution.

Quite logically the Communists, while denying the Russian people the freedom of opinion, do not allow the freedom of either written or spoken word. Their official views on the subject have been quite frankly formulated in the *Pravda* :

‘He who seeks to shake the foundations of the Socialist system and to damage Socialist property is a public enemy. He will not be given one scrap of paper, he will not cross the threshold of a printing works to carry out his cowardly designs. He will not be allowed a hall, a room, even a corner, in which to spread poison by his words.’¹

¹ *Pravda*, June 22, 1936.

No Press other than that controlled by the Communist Party exists in the U.S.S.R. All publications are subjected to a very strict censorship. Private correspondence is frequently opened by the political police.

There is also no freedom of assemblies or associations in the U.S.S.R. Meetings can be held only by the Communist Party or by bodies and organizations fully controlled by the Party. No other political organization but the Communist Party is permitted to function. No trade unions, co-operative and other societies, apart from those controlled by the Communists, are allowed.

Again this fact is quite openly acknowledged by the responsible Soviet leaders. Stalin himself, while discussing the new Soviet Constitution, said: 'As for freedom of political parties other than the Communist Party, there can be no question of that.'¹

Stalin governs Russia by methods of intimidation, terrorism, and an elaborate system of spying. His regime is frankly and openly tyrannical. Were it as progressive as some sycophants declare it to be, surely the number of political prisoners in the U.S.S.R. would not have reached the figure of 6 or 7 million. Some competent observers put it as high as 10 million.

¹ *Pravda*, November 25, 1936.

XIV

Stalin's Aims

STALIN'S AIMS

STALIN is a man of few ideas, but these ideas are pretty firmly fixed in his mind. Besides, being a pragmatist, he is greatly influenced by precedent. One of his most cherished beliefs is the idea of a World Communist Revolution. And for his pragmatic mind there is very good reason to maintain this belief. Has he not, with his own eyes, seen how Lenin's mad theories have become facts in Russia? If Lenin could establish his dictatorship in Russia, why cannot Stalin make himself the Communist master of at least one-half of the world?

There is also another precedent which is always present in Stalin's mind. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia was made possible owing to the Great War, which shattered the economic, social, and political foundations of the country. Stalin reasons that the world revolution must also be preceded by a new world holocaust. But how? The methods of the direct attack on capitalism practised during the first five or six years of the Bolshevik regime having failed, Stalin has decided

to resort to a deeply laid and cunning intrigue. It is now abundantly clear that during the last six years his efforts have been directed to the creation of such conditions in European politics which would make inevitable an armed conflict between the nations of Europe.

Up till 1933 the chances of such a conflict were negligible, and Stalin, correspondingly, directed his efforts to the disruption of the capitalist countries from within, to stirring up economic and social strife, and to encouraging nationalist and revolutionary movements in China, India, Mexico, and other 'colonial' countries.

Hitler's advent to power has opened up a new vista for the Communist intrigue. It became plain that sooner or later Nazi Germany, imbued with the old Prussian spirit of world domination, would come to grips with the democratic countries. Therefore, Stalin thought it expedient to switch over to more active policy, and began to work for the provocation of a war.

In 1934 the Soviets joined the League of Nations in order to make use of it as a medium for preventing democratic countries from arriving at some sort of settlement with Italy and Germany. All the speeches made by Litvinov and all the proposals put forward by him were intended to stir up a quarrel between democratic and totalitarian

countries. The civil war in Spain, provoked to a large extent by the persistent Communist intrigue, provided Stalin with another opportunity for precipitating a general conflagration in Europe.

This attempt having failed Stalin tried another ruse : he started the ill-fated negotiations with Great Britain and France, hoping that these negotiations would provoke Hitler to rash action in order to prevent the 'encirclement' of Germany. At the same time Stalin, under a cloak of profound secrecy, initiated talks with Germany.

This time his intrigue has succeeded. By concluding the pact with Nazi Germany, Stalin gave her tremendous encouragement and thus precipitated the present war. His responsibility for this crime against humanity is equal to that of Hitler himself, if not greater.

How will Stalin exploit the situation created by war, for achieving the ambition of establishing his tyranny, disguised as Communism, over Europe ? The broad outline of his cunning scheme may be quite easily drawn.

First of all, Stalin will strive to prolong the war in order to allow both the belligerents to waste their strength. At the same time he will take every possible precaution to remain outside the major conflict as long as he possibly can, and preserve intact the forces and resources which

he possesses now, and which he may later accumulate.

Stalin would have liked to see the Polish resistance to the German invasion last at least till the spring of 1940. He was prepared not only to preserve a strict neutrality, but even to help the Poles by supplying them with war materials. The events, however, took an unexpectedly rapid turn. The Poles collapsed, and Stalin immediately invoked the provisions of the secret treaty which he concluded with the Germans simultaneously with the signing of the pact of non-aggression. There is every reason to presume that one of the most important clauses of this treaty is the recognition by Germany of Soviet 'exclusive interests' in the eastern provinces of Poland, in the Baltic States, in Bessarabia, and possibly in Ruthenia.

Poland has already been partitioned between Germany and Soviet Russia. The fate of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania has also been sealed. All these territories are, or soon will be, completely 'Sovietized,' i.e. the same economic, social, and political system which exists in the U.S.S.R. will be introduced there. Landowners, capitalists, priests, officers, intellectuals, well-to-do peasants will be either 'liquidated' or rounded up and sent to Siberian labour camps, where they will perish

of starvation, hardships, and diseases, the factories will be 'nationalized' and put under the control of Soviet officials, the land will also be nationalized and collective and State farms will be set up. All these reforms will be imposed on the population with the utmost severity and cruelty.

As long as the struggle between the Allies and Germany is in progress, Stalin has no fear that the Germans will turn against the U.S.S.R. He realizes that however ardently Hitler might wish to get rid of a treacherous ally, he could not do it until he has overpowered Great Britain and France.

Such is the first part of Stalin's plan : with the help of the Germans he is adding many territories in northern and eastern Europe to his Communist domain.

But what would be Stalin's policy should Germany suffer a reverse in her struggle against the Allies ? There is little doubt that in that case he will render every possible assistance to the Germans. He will supply them with all sorts of war and raw materials, even if he has to cut the requirements of Russia to a bare minimum. He will embark on all sorts of intrigues and subterfuges to prevent neutral countries from joining the anti-German coalition. He will try to stir up industrial and other troubles in the allied countries

and in the countries friendly to Great Britain and France. Acts of sabotage, political assassinations, and other crimes will be encouraged and engineered by Communist agents.

It is doubtful, however, whether Stalin would send the Red Army to the succour of the Germans as long as Hitler and other prominent anti-Communist Nazi leaders remain in power. Most likely Stalin will make an effort to engineer a Communist revolution in Germany first. The conditions for such a revolution are favourable there. The German people are suffering serious hardships and the promise of an immediate peace may prove to be a mighty lever for provoking a revolt against Hitler, especially if the military power of Germany is impaired.

Such is the second part of Stalin's cunning plan: with the unwilling help of the Western democracies he is intending to provoke a Communist revolution in Germany and the territories dependent on her. Should this intrigue succeed Stalin would then try to subjugate other European countries. It must be expected that disruption of these countries from within will be prosecuted with vigour and determination. Skilful propaganda, very often disguised under the cloak of patriotic and humanitarian phraseology, will be conducted, all sorts of confusion will be created

in the public mind, a network of secret organizations and agencies will be established, all big and small causes of social and economic discontent will be exploited to the full.

The longer the war drags on the more precarious will become economic and social conditions in all the European countries. Nerves will get ragged and the morale of the people undermined. Then a false promise of immediate peace will be made by the Communists everywhere and the peoples will be persuaded to put an end to the external war and start civil wars which are 'to liberate the workers and peasants from their capitalist tyrants.'

Broadly speaking Stalin will employ the same methods for furthering his aims which were crowned with such success in Russia in 1917-1918.

Of course, details of this general scheme may be altered and modified by Stalin under the pressure of circumstances. I maintain, however, that he will try to direct his policy along the lines broadly traced above. As a narrow-minded pragmatist he could hardly be expected to deviate considerably from the trail blazed for him by his predecessor and teacher, Lenin.

It must be recognized that the present international position of the U.S.S.R. is rather strong.

Stalin's bad dream has always been the possibility of Germany and Great Britain joining forces for the destruction of the Communist stronghold in Moscow. This dream has now disappeared, and we must trust Stalin to make the utmost out of the changed conditions.

It is obvious that Hitler, while he is engaged in a life and death struggle in the West, cannot afford to risk a clash with the Soviets. Knowing this, Stalin will extort from the Germans many far-reaching concessions. He has already secured, with little effort, one half of Poland and destroyed German influence in all the Baltic countries. Soon his intrigue will spread to Scandinavia, the Balkans, and the countries of the Middle East. Most likely Stalin will also consider the circumstances favourable for making a bid for the inclusion of India into his Red Empire.

XV

Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

AND now to sum up. There is nothing remarkable about Stalin as a man. Intellectually he is a mediocrity and his personality is devoid of any redeeming features. His strong point is his utter disregard of morals, his readiness to employ any means for achieving his ends. There is something inhuman about him, but certainly nothing that bears the stamp of genius.

Stalin has always loved power. In his youth he wanted to dominate a small group of his party comrades ; later he succeeded in establishing his supremacy in the Russian Communist Party ; this made him an absolute dictator of Russia. The strong wine of power went to his head, and now he is striving to dominate the World.

Being a practical man, Stalin realizes that in order to achieve this ambition he must make necessary preparations. He must have a numerically strong, well-trained, and well-equipped army, the industrial base must be properly organized, all opposition to his regime within the country must be mercilessly crushed.

As we know, since 1928 tremendous efforts have been made by the Soviets for the militarization of Russia. The Red Army has been reorganized and increased to such an extent that the Soviets are now able to put in the field at least 7 million fully trained men, their total man-power being between 20 and 22 million. The armaments have also been improved and augmented. The Soviets possess a numerically strong air force, and the army units are well supplied with tanks, heavy artillery, and mechanized transport. The idea of industrialization, as well as the scheme of collectivization of agriculture, were dictated not so much by economic or social as by purely military considerations.

As to the crushing of opposition, Stalin, during the last three years, has broken all the known historical records. The results of this 'heresy hunting' have been disastrous for the country and, in the long run, for the Soviet regime itself. According to the Soviet official sources, during 1937 alone over 100,000 Communist Party members who held responsible posts in the Soviet economic administration were removed from their posts and replaced by new men, recruited from the lower strata of the Soviet officialdom. In most cases the new-comers were able to get their posts by the most base means, by low intrigue,

and by exceptional zeal in hunting down 'Trotskyists,' denouncing 'wreckers,' 'foreign spies,' and 'enemies of the people.'

The whole of the Soviet administrative machinery is now in the state of perpetual shuffle which makes impossible the accumulation of knowledge and experience necessary for the smooth and efficient running of the affairs of the State.

Moreover, everybody in Soviet Russia is afraid now of showing his initiative and of accepting responsibility for any step or measure, however trivial, because any action taken without blessing from above may be interpreted as an act of 'wrecking' or sabotage. The result is that the central Soviet institutions are inundated with requests for instructions from the local authorities. Naturally, they cannot possibly cope with this flood of inquiries, requests, reports, etc., and the whole of the Soviet highly centralized cumbersome bureaucratic machinery is getting clogged and is slowly crumbling under its own weight.

Being a despotical and obstinate man, Stalin remains firmly convinced that his policy is absolutely right and that all the shortcomings and hitches are due to inefficiency, misdemeanour, and unfaithfulness on the part of the officials who are entrusted with the task of carrying out this

policy. He thinks that there is nothing wrong with his system, and that the only problem he has to solve is to find the right men for the right jobs.

But such men cannot be found amongst the corrupted Communist Party members. In desperation Stalin institutes fresh 'purges' of the Party and ruthlessly exterminates all those whom he considers to be unfaithful, unreliable, or inefficient. The Red Dictator cannot break this vicious circle which he himself created.

He fails to see true practical results of his internal policy. Russia, under his rule, cannot become really strong, firstly because of the acute discontent which this policy arouses among the peoples of Russia, and, secondly, because his system breeds chaos in the administration of the country and in the management of its economic affairs.

The acid test of the Finnish campaign has shown that the Soviet giant possesses feet of clay.

Stalin is not a political leader in the accepted sense of the word. He drives, not leads, the Russian people to the goal of Communism, of the real meaning and essence of which he claims to be the only prophet and interpreter.

As a statesman Stalin is a failure. He did not bring into the World any new ideas or methods

of statesmanship. The only outstanding feature of the present regime in the U.S.S.R. is the so-called planned economy. But this idea does not belong to Lenin or Stalin. It was born in Germany during the last war, and its begetter was a German statesman, Dr. Rathenau. Stalin has done everything to compromise this idea. 'I think it is a disaster for the idea of Planning that Russia should have been the country where it has first been tried out,' said a prominent English economist, and everyone who has studied the Soviet system would concur with this view.

All other methods of Stalin's government are neither original nor ingenious. They have been practised from time immemorial by all despots and tyrants.

The economically and politically impossible system which Stalin tries to build up in Russia is bound to fall sooner or later. Many a despot before Stalin attempted to shape the world in accordance with his conception, without taking into consideration the essentials of human nature, the vital interests of the people, the material and cultural conditions of the country. These attempts came to nothing and they have left nothing for posterity but a grim memory of cruelty, sufferings, and misery.

I fully realize that my views on Stalin's person-

ality and his activities may cause a shock to some of my readers. They might say: 'Stalin is a man of high ideals. He wants to make Russian people prosperous, happy, and content. He strives to lift backward Russia to a higher industrial, agricultural, social, and cultural level. He is a liberator of humanity from exploitation and oppression. He is a prophet of a new, just social order throughout the World.'

My answer to this argument is this: it may be quite true that such are Stalin's ideals and ambitions. I don't know. For argument's sake I am ready to concede this point.

But what are ideals? They are abstractions existing only in man's brain and nowhere else. Far more important are the methods by which the ideal is attained, because they affect the everyday life of men and women. The ideal may be very lofty and praiseworthy in all respects, but when the means applied are causing misery and suffering to the people, when they are cruel and amoral, what is the use of an abstract ideal?

In the early days of Christianity there was in North Africa a sect which claimed to have found a true and speedy way to eternal salvation. The fanatics, armed with clubs, invaded towns and villages and killed everyone in sight, especially young children. They argued that the death

from the hand of an assassin gave the victims the seal of martyrdom and thus ensured for them eternal life in Heaven.

But we, the people of the twentieth century, cannot possibly approve of this method of attaining the lofty ideal of these primitive fanatics. Why should we then give our moral blessings to Stalin's cruel methods of introducing the Communist ideal in Russia, and, eventually, in the whole world? Admirers of Stalin and sympathizers with 'the splendid Soviet experiment' should remember that Russians are human beings and not the white mice or guinea-pigs vivisected in the laboratories . . .

I, personally, cannot accept the contention, so popular in certain European socialist and radical circles, that Stalin is a master-builder of a new, just social order. The unbiased and unprejudiced study of present Russian economic and social conditions leads me to a contrary conclusion.

I am also convinced that Communism, being a modern form of pre-Christian, Oriental, and heathen despotism, will bring humanity nothing but poverty, slavery, and barbarity. Communism in Stalin's interpretation is the most deadly enemy of Christian civilization and culture.

Everything that Stalin has done in my unhappy

country makes of him one of the most sinister figures in world history. I have little doubt that posterity will put him in the same category of rulers as Cambiz, Nero, or Abdul the Damned of Turkey.



